This letter comes at the end of an unprecedented year for us all. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still unfolding, even if, in this corner of the United States at least, a sense of an impending “end” has accompanied the dissemination of vaccines in recent months. Before the year fades into memory, we must record and ruminate upon the degree to which the pandemic upended life and norms, and brought large-scale devastation, in particular to less-resourced, often racialized and marginalized, communities. It was not very long ago that we hurried to end the operations of the Center, disperse the members of our community to other locations, and suspend a great deal of our activities with fear, anxiety and uncertainty over what the future may hold.

This year has been a time of adaptation and reckoning. Under guidelines set by the university and state agencies, the Center was made to adapt by reinventing itself as a virtual institution, with events organized and held virtually. We continued our university-based fellowship programs, while suspending our postdoctoral program. We redirected resources that would have been used in paying for travel, hotel accommodations, and honoraria for distinguished guests, and used them to support expanding the number of dissertation fellows from two to three, as well as funding a small grants program to support faculty, in particular pre-tenure faculty. In addition, we launched a fund to support manuscript workshops for faculty nearing the end of a writing project in preparation for publication. Details on these are included in the coming pages.

This has been a year of significant and ambitious self-reflection towards making Tufts an anti-racist institution. As a result we pursued speakers whose talks could help our community grapple with the challenges of our present moment. JT Thomas, a distinguished faculty member from the University of Mississippi spoke on the lessons of antisemitism for W. E. B. DuBois’ thinking. Novelist and scholar Elias Khoury spoke from Beirut about the “culture of challenge” in the Arab world, taking his audience through the intellectual history of Arabic letters from 19th century to the present day, critiquing a staring of prophetic thought that has often been central to movements for social and cultural change in the region.
The Center also sponsored and co-sponsored numerous other events that aimed to enrich the campus conversation on these issues of critical importance, and sought to offer the Center as a (virtual) site for reflection that could inform and inspire the action that is necessary to truly begin the necessary process of repair and reckoning on issues of race, empire and belonging.

With all that we have accomplished, I look very eagerly forward to next fall, when we are—presuming no change to the anticipated lifting of the pandemic closures—able to reopen the Center fully, and to reassemble our community in the heart of the Tufts Medford campus. The Center’s postdoctoral program is restarting with five incoming fellows, complementing our faculty fellows and dissertation fellows. New initiatives, such as the Translating Race Lab are blossoming, and other longstanding ones, such as the Humanities Reading Group, will be able to reconstitute themselves with the intimacy that in-person exchanges offer. I look forward to welcoming back our audiences and attendees, whether faculty from the humanities disciplines, or students pursing scholarly interests, or members of the greater Boston public who regularly join our events.

Kamran Rastegar
Director of the Center for the Humanities at Tufts
Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature
Emergency is the quality of our present moment: a time of crises and a point of rupture through which new conditions of possibility may emerge. Through this theme, the Center will be committed to exploring the various deeply interrelated crises that produce the emergencies of our moment, many of which appear to strike at the very core of social consensus around what is truth, the nature of justice, and the value of life. We will ask: Is this a point of rupture, or of return?
**James (JT) Thomas, University of Mississippi**

Sept 25 | lecture | "An Eternal Monument: Studying the Cathedral of Ani"
**Christina Maranci, Tufts University**

Sept 30 | book talk | "Hyper Education: Why Good Schools, Good Grades, and Good Behavior Are Not Enough" (Co-sponsored by CSRD and RCD)
**Pawan Dhingra, Amherst College**

Sept 30 | lecture | "Sinking Columbus and the Mayflower: Indigenous Struggles, Decolonization, and the Necessity of Solidarity" (Co-sponsored by Anthropology Department)
**Mahtowin Munro, United American Indians of New England**

Oct 2 | book talk | "Nervous Fictions: Literary Form and the Enlightenment Origins of Neuroscience"
**Jess Keiser, Tufts University**

Oct 8 | lecture | "Black Queer Feminism and the Politics of Revelry in Rio de Janeiro" (Co-sponsored by Anthropology Department)
**LaShandra Sullivan, Reed College**
Oct 22 - Oct 25 | film | "Downtown Crossing" (Co-sponsored by Boston Public Library; Northeastern University)
**David Valdes, Tufts University**

Oct 23 | book talk | "Ishtyle: Accenting Gay Indian Nightlife"
**Kareem Khubchandani, Tufts University**

Oct 27 | lecture | "Cartographies of justice against the racial effects of preemptive criminalization and the politics of absence in Guerrero, Mexico" (Co-sponsored by Anthropology Department)
**Mariana Mora, Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology**

Nov 13 | lecture | "Material Remains, Settler-Colonial Hauntings: Comparative Indigenous Aesthetics in Performance"
**Lily Mengesha, Tufts University**

Nov 18 | lecture | "Anthropology of White Supremacy: A Critical Discussion" (Co-sponsored by Anthropology Department)
**Jemima Pierre, UCLA & Aisha Beliso-De Jesús, Princeton University**

Nov 20 | book talk | "Remnants of the Franco-Algerian Rupture: Archiving Postcolonial Minorities"
**Mona El Khoury, Tufts University**
Feb 17 | fellow seminar | "Making Lists and Checking Them Twice: Policing and Governance in 19th century Colonial India"
**Neelum Sohail, CHAT Dissertation Fellow, PhD Candidate in History**

Feb 23 | fellow seminar | "The Stratford Edition: The Old ‘Young America’ and an Anachronistic Democratic Shakespeare"
**Hesam Sharifian, PhD Candidate in Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies**

Feb 26 | book talk | "The Poison Trials: Wonder Drugs, Experiment, and the Battle for Authority in Renaissance Science"
**Alisha Rankin, Associate Professor of History**

Mar 9 | fellow seminar | "Art Addiction"
**Ichiro Takayoshi, CHAT Faculty Fellow; Associate Professor of English**

Mar 18 | fellow seminar | "“In Your Reality”: Cute Girls, Violence, and Your Computer in Doki Doki Literature Club"
**Peter Spearman, CHAT Dissertation Fellow; PhD Candidate in Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies**

Apr 8 | fellow seminar | "Homo Attentus: Technological Backlash and the Rise of Humanism"
**Nick Seaver, CHAT Faculty Fellow, Assistant Professor of Anthropology**
Apr 13 | fellow seminar | "Place-Based Knowledge: Epistemology and Politics of Place in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide"
Gayathri Goel, CHAT Dissertation Fellow; PhD Candidate in English

Apr 16 | lecture | "The Culture of Challenge: Arabic Culture in the Face of Oppression and Decadence" (Co-sponsored by the Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies)
Elias Khoury, Novelist and Public Intellectual

Apr 22 | panel | "Building Transformative Justice at Tufts"
Daanika Gordon, Assistant Professor of Sociology
Lily Mengesha, Fletcher Foundation Assistant Professor of Dramatic Literature in the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies, and the Department of Studies in Race, Colonialism and Diaspora; Jenny Henderson, Paula Gil-Ordoñez Gomez, Research Assistants

Apr 23 | panel | "The Struggle of Non-Sovereign Caribbean Territories: Neoliberalism Since the French Antillean Uprisings of 2009"
H. Adlai Murdoch, Tufts University
Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken, Research Center for Material Culture
Vincent Joos, Florida State University
Jacqueline Lazu, DePaul University
Hanétha Vété-Congolo, Bowdoin College
Faculty Fellows

Nick Seaver
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Project Title: Homo Attentus: Technological Backlash and the Rise of Attentional Humanism

Ichiro Takayoshi
Assistant Professor of English
Project Title: Enjoy the Arts Because It’s Irrational Not To

Doctoral Fellows

Gayathri Goel
PhD Candidate in the Department of English
Dissertation Title: Entanglements: Radical Kinship for Ecological Liberation

Neelum Sohail
PhD candidate in the Department of History
Dissertation Title: Empire of the Beat: Everyday Policing and Governance in India and the British Empire, 1850-1970

Peter Spearman
PhD candidate in the Department of Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies
Dissertation Title: New Game+: Video Games and Memories Made in Virtual Worlds
The Center for the Humanities at Tufts made available small grants of up to $5000 to support faculty initiatives in the humanities and social sciences to link current crises — in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Black Lives Matter movement — to research and/or teaching at Tufts. These grants were open to both part-time and full-time faculty. Eight grants were awarded to ten faculty members.

"Another Tufts is Possible" Forum Series
Kareem Khubchandani, Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies

Anthropology Speaker Series: "Global Racism, State Violence, and Activism"
Amahl Bishara, Anthropology; Studies in Race, Colonialism, Diaspora; Sarah Luna, Anthropology

"Black Matters: On Black Breath"
Kimberly Bain, English

"Building Transformative Justice at Tufts"
Daanika Gordon, Anthropology; Studies in Race, Colonialism, Diaspora; Lily Mengesha, Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies; Studies in Race, Colonialism, Diaspora

"Civic Education Consortium: Building our World Through Civic Humanities, Critical Thinking, and Community Engagement"
Kris Manjapra, History; Studies in Race, Colonialism, Diaspora

"Downtown Crossing"
David Valdes, English

"Stable Ground: Eviction Defense Terminals"
Anthony Romero, SMFA

"Unworking"
Alexander Blanchette, Anthropology
This year, the Center offered funding for virtual manuscript workshops for faculty in the humanities who were in the final stages of completing a book manuscript or other similar major research or creative project of relevance to their academic work at Tufts. Faculty invited outside specialists to review a project in progress to offer substantive feedback and comments on the project in an organized workshop involving the author/creator and the other readers. Five projects were funded.

"Activism under Fire: The Politics of Non-Violence in Rio de Janeiro’s Most Dangerous Favela"
**Anjuli Fahlberg, Sociology**

"Inventing Jack Kerouac: Reception and Reputation 1957-2007"
**Ronna Johnson, English; American Studies**

"The Voice of Virtue: Moral Song in Late Renaissance France, 1574-1652"
**Melinda Latour, Musicology**

"Concrete Colonialism: Architecture, Infrastructure, Urbanism, and the American Colonial Project in the Philippines"
**Diana Martinez, Architectural Studies**

"Extreme Lives: Poverty & Intimacy in Urban Peru"
**Kristin Skrabut, Urban Policy; Anthropology**
FACULTY BOARD

Alessandra Campana, *Music*
Eulogio Guzmán, *Visual and Material Studies, SMFA*
Peter Levine, *Philosophy*
Pedro Ángel Palou, *Romance Languages*
Alisha Rankin, *History*
Kamran Rastegar, *International Literary and Cultural Studies*

STAFF

Kamran Rastegar, *Director*
Courtney McDermott, *Program Administrator*
The goal of this group is to continue to create a model of global intellectual collaboration that will renew humanities research, innovate curricula, and ultimately, generate a model of academic study that can shape a new era for Tufts and for the next generation of humanists. Building on the ongoing work of the Center for the Humanities at Tufts, and the newly-established Department of Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora, our work encompasses both academic interdisciplinary research projects such as the Comparative Global Humanities initiative, as well as outwardly-focused conversations, such as the Boston African American Freedom Trail project. Our programming has encouraged those conversations around new research that offer group members a context that stimulates new research approaches and methodologies towards enriching both their individual research aims, and the global conversation.

The Humanities Reading Group, involving faculty from across the arts and humanities departments, meets several times a semester to discuss readings on the role of the humanities in public life. The group is organized by Professor John Lurz (English).